

ROUTE 18
TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS
**COMMUNITY
PARTNERING TEAM**
CITY OF NEW BRUNSWICK

**COMMUNITY PARTNERING TEAM
CORRIDOR AESTHETICS TASK FORCE
MEETING NO. 2 REPORT**

January 31, 2001

DATE: January 9, 2001
TIME: 9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.
LOCATION: Conference Room, Middlesex County Planning Dept.,
Elks Building, City of New Brunswick, NJ

1. PURPOSE OF MEETING

To review the community issues and features identified in the first task force meeting; to present noise contour report and discuss large-scale enhancements such as noise barriers and retaining walls; and to develop potential theme for the corridor. (Agenda attached)

2. MEETING SUMMARY

Martine Culbertson opened the meeting and welcomed everyone. She introduced Bill Birch's assistant, Youssef Ben-Khayat, NJDOT Project Engineer, and asked participants to introduce themselves. Martine then reviewed the agenda and the list of issues generated at the first task force meeting. The following issues were added:

- Signage - the need for improved directional signage in the corridor for key points (such as Rutgers, Boyd Park, and Downtown)
- Large overhead signs would be placed before the "gateway" area into New Brunswick, and will direct traffic to local access (C-D roadway) verses Route 18 (limited access).
- Consider using ballards as part of streetscape elements along sidewalks on Route 18 for pedestrian safety where appropriate (between Newell Avenue and Phelps Avenue)

A brief update of the project status was given by Paul Nowicki. He mentioned to the task force that the next CPT meeting scheduled for January 24th may be moved ahead in February so the model of Route 18 may be available for the CPT meeting and the information would be ready to present from both task forces and the FHWA comments on the EA document. Paul commented that they would notify the CPT after Friday as to the next meeting date and that the Public hearing for the project is still tentatively set for late February.

Nowicki then presented the review of the large-scale enhancements discussed at the previous task force meeting. Photographs of existing architectural features along the corridor were presented and key elements identified for possible application for the project theme. The key



enhancements to the corridor were identified as the “gateway” area prior to Paulus Boulevard, the pedestrian overpasses, the Commercial Avenue “gateway” entrance to Boyd Park and the George Street entrance to the Rutgers Boathouse and the City Docks area of Boyd Park. The most significant aspect of these enhancements are the noise walls and retaining walls. The task force discussed the shape, texture and appearance preferences by looking at images in the NJDOT “A Special Look” publication and on display boards presented by Gannett Fleming. The display boards presented photographs of noise wall surfaces, streetscape, railing, pavement, and lighting elements.

The following points were expressed by the task force members:

- No interest in “art contest” type murals, direct from the City – low maintenance and anti-graffiti are most important – motifs or historic etchings may be possible
- No wood – due to maintenance concern
- On the landscape berm between Newell and Phelps – place low wall above and down to the corners – to prevent pedestrians cutting through
- Preference for softer curves to noise walls on top edge – “more flowing” river theme
- Use multiple tones - to decrease height and provide relief to the “straight brick wall” sense
- Preference for red brick, with white edges – classic, traditional look
- “Gateway” area before Paulus Boulevard with noise walls in each side needs to be designed so as welcoming and not a “tunnel” feeling
- Don’t over do dark colors and brick – break up or relieve with stone work or lighter tones
- Consider indents or wall motifs in the noise walls along the neighborhoods – provide relief
- Consider ribbing in the noise wall structures - to give “flow” and relief to flat wall surface
- Arches should be longer and gentle – not too tight as found in industrial walls
- Materials need to blend in – don’t use too many contrasts
- “Gateway” area should give a feeling of entering and open welcome – not tunnel vision and closed in
- Spacing of vertical elements to give sense of a widening feeling
- Spacing of horizontal elements to also open up area
- Provide two schemes to look at: (1) soft flowing long curves and gentle arches or (2) Federalist style with gables and columns
- Textures: preferences are for the surfaces to be brick or stone (however not faux stone that looks artificial or a color that appears discolored); needs to appear as “natural materials”
- Material used for retaining walls and noise walls should be anti-graffiti or discourage graffiti
- Light covered caps – to reduce height of walls
- Fencing and Railing: should follow the themes – and try to relieve sense of height or at least not add to it (light colors on pedestrian overpasses) and be consistent with classic style
- “Gateway” into Boyd Park on Commercial and George Street must have soften visual aspect of retaining walls (anti-graffiti) and emphasize opening into Park areas with classic streetscape elements and banners. Landscaping should be attractive with low maintenance

The following questions were raised during the discussions:

Q – Do wall murals or motifs discourage graffiti?

A – If the community actively participates in the creation of murals, the citizens are less likely to deface them and motifs and murals are less likely to have graffiti than plain white flat surfaces.

Q - How high are the walls?

A - In most areas, the noise walls will be 14 feet in height.

Q – Will the berm between Newell Avenue and Phelps Avenue be wide enough to have a wall on top?

A – There is sufficient area to put a wall or fence at the top and the berm can be angled for sight distance.

Q – What type of architecture will be used for the parking facilities between Richmond Street and New Street?

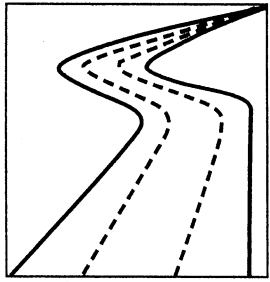
A – That is owned by DEVCO and they need to be consulted. Sarah Clarke is the DEVCO representative on the CPT.

Paul summarized by saying he would work with Nick to develop the two schemes discussed above for the various key enhancement areas. A comment was raised that the gateway should not look like the sample display board of the pedestrian overpass at Paulus Boulevard except that the landscape berm would be to one side and a type of noise wall will be on the other side. Paul noted that the concept would consider an arched type pedestrian overpass as part of one of the schemes.

To close, Martine asked for action items or feedback from each task force member. The following comments were made: right-of-way determinations would happen late summer at the earliest, make style soft curves not square, make “gateways” welcoming and they will use the park more, create “nice college town” atmosphere again, task force heading in a good direction, important to see samples of the two schemes, don’t forget lighting and streetscape elements, give “A Special Look” publication to all CPT members at next meeting. It was agreed that the next Corridor Aesthetic Task Force Meeting No. 3 would be scheduled after the next CPT meeting and the Public Hearing. The corridor conceptual schemes can be presented at the next CPT meeting and then at the Public Hearing for comment. The feedback will then be part of the agenda for next task force meeting to be held tentatively in March/April, 2001.

3. ACTION ITEMS

- Task Forces Members to review “A Special Look” with constituents and provide comments to Gannett Fleming on any design features they favor so they can be incorporated into the schemes for the next CPT meeting.
- NJDOT and Gannett Fleming will develop two schemes of the corridor enhancements and provide renderings and display boards for the next CPT Meeting No. 13.
- Martine Culbertson will provide and distribute task force meeting report via email to task force members and hard copies will be distributed at the next CPT meeting to all members with copies of “A Special Look”
- Linda Hunter and Glenn Patterson will confirm next meeting date and place with Gannett Fleming and other task force members after the next CPT meeting and Public Hearing.



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CORRIDOR AESTHETICS TASK FORCE

MEETING NO. 2

AGENDA

January 9, 2001

Objective: To review the community issues and features identified in the first task force meeting; to present noise contour report and discuss large-scale enhancements such as noise barriers and retaining walls; and to develop potential theme for the corridor.

I. Welcome and Introductions

- Agenda and Meeting Goals
- Review Task Force Meeting No.1 – Issues and Features

II. Discuss Large Scale Enhancements

- Noise Walls and Retaining Walls
- Pedestrian Overpasses
- Open Space Areas

III. Develop Corridor Theme

- Sample Images
- Route 18 Conceptual Renderings
- Streetscape Elements

IV. Summary and Close

- Action Items
- Feedback / Next Meeting

